REGIONALIZATION
Framework for Action

September 1988

Province of British Columbia

89-04973/

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page No.

I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Business Plan Framework 1
- The Regional Development Strategy 1
- The Regional Development Mission 1
- Regional Development Strategic Priorities 2
- Regional Development Initiatives 2

II BRITISH COLUMBIA'S PLAN FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The Structure of the B.C. Economy 5
- The Environment and the Economy 7
- Regional Decision-making 9

III MANDATE AND PRIORITIES

- Mission 11
- Principles 11
- Strategic Priorities 11
- Key Initiatives 12
- Other Government Regionalization Initiatives 14

IV ORGANIZATION — SUPPORTING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The Ministers of State 15
- Parliamentary Secretaries 16
- The Role of MLAs 16
- Cabinet Committee on Regional Development 17

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BUSINESS PLAN FRAMEWORK

The provincial government is committed to building a strong, dynamic and resilient economy providing increased opportunity for British Columbians in all regions of the Province.

To meet this commitment, Government has established the Ministry of Regional Development and strengthened the role of the Ministers of State in directing the Province's strategy for regional economic development and diversification. This Business Plan shows how the Ministers of State intend to translate Government's commitment into action.

THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The rationale, goals and objectives of this Business Plan evolve from three closely related themes which comprise Government's strategy for regional economic growth and diversification. These themes are:

- **The Structure of the B.C. Economy** — Understanding the implications of being a small, open economy whose economic performance is heavily dependent on international trade.
- **The Environment and the Economy** — Recognizing the inseparable links between a sustainable environment and economic growth.
- **Regional Decision-Making** — Ensuring a forum for communication, consensus and decision-making by the people of the regions.

THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MISSION

It is the mission of the Ministry of Regional Development and Ministers of State to foster environmentally sound economic growth and diversification and to ensure access to government services in all regions of the Province.

In carrying out this mission, the Ministers of State are committed to the following principles:

- Emphasis on the development of all regions.
- Leadership and involvement of people from the regions.
- Sharing responsibilities and benefits with Native Peoples.
- Linking environmental and economic decision-making.
- Protecting our rich endowment of natural resources.
- Excellence in the delivery of Government services.
- Freeing up the private sector to lead economic growth.
- Emphasizing communication, consultation and consensus.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The major strategic priorities for the Ministry of Regional Development and Ministers of State are as follows:

- To foster environmentally sound economic growth and development and promote economic diversification in all regions of the Province.
- To manage, develop and promote a world class system of parks in a manner that is supportive of regional economic development initiatives.
- To manage and allocate public lands in the most beneficial way to ensure access for industry, commerce, settlement and conservation uses.
- To promote the economic, cultural and social development of Native Peoples.
- To protect British Columbia's interests in federal/provincial and interprovincial arrangements and ensure that the Province receives its "fair share" of federal regional development, diversification and procurement expenditures.
- To facilitate effective channels of involvement and input between regions and line ministries involved in economic development and in the funding and delivery of health, education and other social services.
- To ensure effective communications between Government and the regions and to facilitate a good public understanding of Government programs and services in promoting regional development.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The Ministry of Regional Development and Ministers of State will target major initiatives in three areas:

Regional Development

Initiatives in this area will ensure the effective implementation of government's commitment to regionalization as a base for economic and social development. Key actions will include:

- Completing regional economic and social development plans.
- Review of government services to determine which could be better delivered on a regional basis or through Government Agent offices.
- Restructuring business development programs to better support regional development.
- Discussions with municipalities on possible transfer of responsibilities, on a planned and mutually acceptable basis, to local government.
- Ministry efforts targeted in those sectors identified as highest priority by the development regions.
- Integrating regional priorities and projects into the provincial budget process.
- Facilitating regional access to investment capital and international markets.
- Promoting high growth, high technology industries.

- Infrastructure policies to support regional economic development.
- Special efforts to develop tourism in all regions.

Policy Planning and Programs

Priority initiatives in this area focus on the implementation of provincial strategies and programs, and include the following:

- A new telecommunications strategy to encourage research and manufacturing development activity in the high growth communications sector.
- A Task Force on the Environment and the B.C. Economy to coordinate environmental protection and economic decision-making.
- Promotion and marketing of Provincial parks to support the B.C. tourist industry.
- A new provincial strategy for municipal solid wastes.
- Construction of a Heritage, Language and Cultural Centre for Native peoples.
- Negotiation of outstanding Cut Off Indian land claims.
- Supporting the implementation of plans to enhance Native alcohol and drug prevention and treatment programs.
- An action plan to deal with federal/provincial broadcast legislation conflicts.
- Action on Special Enterprise Zones.

Ministry Operations

Priority activities in this area are intended to provide effective and efficient administrative and support services to program and regional operation and include the following:

- A team approach to problem-solving, budgeting and resource allocation for all Ministers of State.
- Consolidation of government mapping services under a single management structure.
- Adjustments to line ministry administrative boundaries to facilitate a better coordination of government services with regional development initiatives.
- Increase the Government Agent's role in providing public access government information and services.

Ministry operations under the five Ministers of State are being restructured to provide for a more streamlined and integrated organization in support of regional development and assigned program responsibilities.

In addition, a set of action plans for all key initiatives has been developed to guide staff in translating the strategic objectives of Government's regional development program into achievable outcomes.

SECTION II: BRITISH COLUMBIA'S PLAN FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The rationale, goals and objectives of this Business Plan evolve from an understanding of the structure of the B.C. economy, of the inseparable links between a sustainable environment and economic growth, and of the need to provide a forum for regional decision-making.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE B.C. ECONOMY

In developing a plan for achieving economic prosperity in all regions of the Province, it is important to identify the constraints and opportunities for government action.

The Limits of a Small, Open Economy

As a resource-based, open economy, this province's economic performance is heavily dependent on international trade. Approximately 25% of British Columbia's GDP (gross domestic product) is derived from exports. Moreover, in excess of 90% of those exports are either raw materials, such as natural gas, coal and metal concentrates, or resource-based products, such as lumber, wood pulp, paper and refined metals. Less than 5% are end products, 80% of which are destined for the United States.

Our reliance on the export of resource products poses special problems for British Columbia. Our economy is extremely vulnerable to changes in exchange rates, "protectionist" trade practices in foreign markets and fluctuating world commodity prices. New capacity in developing countries with low labour costs has increased world competition in primary resource industries.

Other factors affecting British Columbia's competitive position in world markets, and which are largely beyond the control of the Provincial Government, include:

- money supply
- interest rates
- a weakening U.S. economy
- trade deregulation
- increasing world debt
- international transportation costs

Influencing Economic Growth and Diversification

Factors that the Provincial Government can influence include:

- Economic infrastructure including transportation systems, communications and energy supplies.
- Social infrastructure including education, job training, health care and community amenities.
- The Provincial tax framework.
- Environmental and resource management.
- The general industrial relations climate and wage costs.
- Research activity and business development supports.
- Federal/Provincial arrangements and agreements.

British Columbia's Natural Resource Base

Resource extraction and processing accounts for about 16% of total provincial employment and provides a foundation for growth in related manufacturing and knowledge-based industries such as machinery, chemicals and engineering services.

It is expected that the Province's resource-based industries will continue to generate significant output, particularly goods for export markets, and will remain an important source of strength and stability for our economy.

Resource industries remain dependent on relatively low value-added products. Further processing of natural resources is limited and exports tend to concentrate at the commodity level.

Based on present trends, employment in resource industries and related secondary manufacturing is unlikely to increase, and may even decline over the next decade, particularly in the forestry and mining sectors where technological innovations are expected to increase output but reduce the demand for labour.

Plans for building strong regional economies must therefore promote diversification and higher value-added resource processing.

New Opportunities for Diversification

Economic growth over the next decade will increasingly depend on technological factors and most of the new jobs will likely come from outside the resource sectors.

British Columbia can become a major advanced economy only if it has effective means of acquiring, absorbing and transferring new technologies. Today, British Columbia imports ten times as many technology-intensive products as it exports, creating an annual deficit of $1.6 billion in technology products trade. Also, expenditures on research and development by all sectors of the B.C. economy are lower than most other provinces. On the plus side, British Columbia's fastest growing industry is electronics, now the fifth largest industry in the Province.

British Columbia is also well positioned to exploit certain specialized market niches, such as communications equipment, computer software, resource mapping, under-sea robotics and remote sensing. An increasing emphasis on research and development, by both the private sector and government, is required to realize this opportunity.

Service industries, which represent as much as 75% of total provincial output and generate almost 1 million jobs, are expected to increase significantly over the next decade. Tourism, in particular, is expected to exhibit strong growth as British Columbia becomes recognized as a world-class destination.

Other services, for example, health care and the retirement and education industries, provide important support for this Province's human resources, and are expected to show an increased share in the number of new jobs. Also, the highvalue service sector, such as engineering consulting and technology services will make an increasing and substantial contribution over the next decade.

Changing Patterns of International Trade

In recent years there has been a significant reordering of international trading patterns, led by the strong economic growth of Japan and the emerging role of newly industrialized Pacific Rim countries. In 1960 nearly two-thirds of B.C. exports went to the U.S. and only 10% to Asian Pacific countries. Today the U.S. market represents only 45% of foreign sales, while the Asian Pacific market accounts for 34%. Japan alone buys more than one-quarter of all British Columbia exports.

The relative importance of the Asian Pacific market is expected to grow over the next two decades as a result of their economies growing faster than those in our more traditional markets. For example, real GDP growth to the year 2000 for the Asian Pacific region is forecast at an average of 5.7% per annum, as compared with 3% for the U.S. and 2.7% for Western Europe.

International trade continues to be critical for our resource industries, where new sources of competitive supply are forcing B.C.'s natural resource exporters to focus on increasing productivity. Our resource-based exports are especially vulnerable to foreign government initiatives to subsidize natural resource development.

The globalization of markets for natural resource products and tourism reinforces the importance of international marketing activities. It is critical that the Province increase its cultural and business ties with Japan and other Pacific Rim countries and that regional economic plans be closely coordinated with the activities undertaken by the new Ministry of International Business and Immigration.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY

Government holds the view that the use of resources and the environment should assure their highest economic and social benefits both now and for future generations.

This view has been reinforced by the recently published (1987) report of the U.N. sponsored World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Report) and the subsequent report of the Canadian Task Force on Environment and Economy.

Achieving Sustainable Development

To promote environmentally sound and sustainable economic growth and diversification, it is necessary to meet, at least, five key requirements:

1. To recognize the inseparable links between the environment, the economy and regional stability.
2. To preserve the Province's environmental capital by curbing environmental degradation which impairs resource-based economic activity.
3. To ensure that the management of our resource base and the environment incorporates the changing needs and priorities of the various industries and interest groups in the regions.
4. To effectively integrate decision-making for environmental planning, resource management and regional economic development.
5. To provide effective mechanisms for resolving land use conflicts.

Resource Management and Land Use Conflicts

With a diminishing availability of previously unexploited resources, such as old-growth forests, increased and sustainable output will be achieved only through more intensive management.

Increasing competition for land and natural resources is placing greater pressure on the Province's resource base. Land use conflicts among resource industries, Native groups, recreation and heritage conservation interests and the tourism industry are becoming more frequent and intense. Urban-rural land use competition can be expected to grow as communities expand into surrounding rural areas.

New mechanisms are required to resolve these conflicts in a manner that reflects regional needs and aspirations and ensures environmentally-sound and sustainable economic growth.

Public Expectations

Both the general public and special interest groups have growing expectations regarding environmental quality and are seeking more involvement in economic decision-making and conflict resolution.

Environmental issues are high on the public agenda. British Columbians are concerned about personal health and safety and are demanding effective environmental monitoring, regulations and enforcement, greater industry responsibility, and better information on environmental issues. Increased national and international attention is being focussed on the quality of the Province's natural environment and its tourism potential.

Although there are a variety of opportunities (statutory and otherwise) for greater public involvement in environmental decision-making, there is a need for a more extensive public education effort. There is also a growing recognition that the law alone cannot enforce the common interest. Community knowledge and support must be increased in the process.

The Ministers of State system presents a more effective mechanism for linking environmental and economic decision-making. In addition to their regional responsibilities, the Ministers of State are also responsible for a number of line program functions which have a direct impact on both economic and regional development activities. This approach affords opportunities to decentralize resource management and give local communities an effective voice in decisions affecting the use of these resources.

REGIONAL DECISION-MAKING

The Provincial Government is committed to building a strong, dynamic and resilient economy with increased opportunities for all British Columbians. To achieve this, the Government has undertaken a fundamental restructuring which includes regionalization as a base for economic and social development.

The basic theme of this restructuring is to move Government closer to the people. Government policy and planning processes will involve the people of a region in decisions that affect their region. This initiative establishes Government's commitment to prepare a regional development strategy that will foster sustainable economic growth and diversification, improved job opportunities, and increased involvement of communities in setting regional economic and social development priorities.

The regional development initiative is both a policy and a process. It is not limited to any particular program, but is an approach to all Provincial programs. It is not another level of government, but rather a meeting place where local government and local people can have input into Provincial policies and decisions.

MLAs, municipal and local governments, local businesses and citizens know and understand the needs of their communities. Regionalization is a way of bringing that knowledge to bear on the priorities and decisions made in Victoria.

With regionalization the process of decision-making is changed. Policy decisions and program delivery are expected to increasingly reflect regional needs and priorities.

Government programs will be examined to determine which services could be better delivered on a regional basis. Ministry budget and resource allocation processes will be modified to better ensure that regional priorities are taken into account.

The Government of British Columbia is preparing a provincial long-term planning strategy, which involves consultation with groups outside Government, including input from each of the development regions. This plan will include regional action plans, linking specific projects identified and ranked at the regional and sub-regional level with Government's strategic priorities and the planning framework in line ministries.

Basic Principles

This regional development initiative is guided by five basic principles:

- Government will maximize the creativity, knowledge and energy of all British Columbians in developing and implementing policy.
- Local governments, boards and commissions will be given greater opportunity to contribute directly to the development of Provincial Government policy and initiatives.
- Government programs will be examined in the broad context of economic and social development and tailored to meet specific regional needs.
- Emphasis will be placed on the development of all the regions.
- Communication, consultation and consensus will be fundamental to achieving the objectives of regionalization.

SECTION III: MANDATE AND PRIORITIES

MISSION

It is the mission of the Ministry of Regional Development and Ministers of State to foster environmentally sound economic growth and diversification and to ensure access to government services in all regions of the Province.

PRINCIPLES

In the pursuit of this mission the Ministers of State adhere to the following principles:

- Emphasis on the development of all regions of the Province.
- Leadership and involvement of MLAs, local governments and regional development groups.
- Sharing the responsibilities and benefits of regional development with Native Peoples.
- Understanding that sustainable economic growth depends on a healthy and well-managed environment in all regions.
- Protecting our rich endowment of natural resources for future generations of British Columbians.
- Excellence in the delivery of Government services.
- Freeing up the private sector to lead economic growth and job creation.
- Emphasizing communication, consultation and consensus by the people of the regions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The major strategic priorities for the Ministry of Regional Development and Ministers of State are as follows:

- To foster environmentally sound economic growth and development and promote economic diversification in all regions of the Province.
- To manage, develop and promote a world class system of parks in a manner that is supportive of regional economic development initiatives.
- To manage and allocate public lands in the most beneficial way to ensure access for industry, commerce, settlement and conservation uses.
- To promote the economic, cultural and social development of Native Peoples.
- To protect British Columbia's interests in federal/provincial and interprovincial arrangements and ensure that the Province receives its "fair share" of federal regional development, diversification and procurement expenditures.
- To facilitate effective channels of involvement and input between regions and line ministries involved in economic development and in the funding and delivery of health, education and other social services.

- To ensure effective communications between Government and the regions and to facilitate public understanding of and access to Government programs and services in all regions.

KEY INITIATIVES

Major initiatives to be undertaken by the Ministry of Regional Development and Ministers of State are focused in three areas: Regional Development, Policy Planning and Programs, and Ministry Operations.

Regional Development

Activities in this area are intended to ensure the effective implementation of government's commitment to regionalization as a base for economic and social development. Specific initiatives include:

1. Complete regional economic and social development inventories and plans for inclusion in the government's long-term plan.
2. Coordinate an inter-ministry review of government services and make recommendations to Cabinet on services which could be better delivered on a regional basis or through Government Agent offices.
3. Review all existing financial assistance and business development programs to determine their applicability to regional development and make recommendations to Cabinet for the expansion of such programs and the opportunity for delivery on a regional basis.
4. In cooperation with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the U.B.C.M., continue discussions respecting the possible transfer of responsibilities, on a planned and mutually acceptable basis, to local government.
5. Target economic analysis, planning and business development activities in those sectors identified as highest priority by the development regions.
6. Work with the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations during the budget development process to ensure that all ministry budgets take into consideration regional development priorities.
7. Facilitate regional access to investment capital and international market opportunities.
8. Recommend policies and initiatives to support the transfer and expansion of new technologies for B.C. industries.
9. Recommend infrastructure policies that are necessary for regional economic development.
10. Recommend policies and programs to develop tourism in all regions of the Province.

Policy Planning and Programs

Key initiatives in this area focus on the implementation of provincial strategies and programs, and include the following:

1. Establish a Task Force on the Environment and the British Columbia Economy directed towards the coordination of economic and environmental issues in a manner which provides consensus for future environmental protection and sustained economic growth.

2. Develop a plan to ensure British Columbia receives its fair share of federal initiatives in telecommunications and related communications activities and develop policies which encourage future research and manufacturing development activity in the high growth communications sector.
3. Develop a provincial position on the regulation of the communications sector, including telephone, cable and the broadcast industry.
4. Develop a plan for presentation to Cabinet to promote and market British Columbia's parks in conjunction with the Ministries of Tourism and Provincial Secretary, and Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture.
5. Recommend to Cabinet a provincial strategy for dealing with municipal solid wastes.
6. Continue to develop, in consultation with Native peoples and with private sector support, a specific action plan for the construction of a Heritage, Language and Cultural Centre.
7. Complete the negotiation of outstanding Cut Off Claims arising out of the tri-partite federal, provincial Indian agreement.
8. In cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Consumer Services, develop plans to enhance Native alcohol and drug prevention and treatment programs.
9. Develop an action plan to remove the Province from a position of conflict with federal broadcast legislation.
10. Review legislation and policy on Special Enterprise Zones and make recommendations to Cabinet.
11. Successfully renegotiate ERDA sub-agreements to better support regional development.

Ministry Operations

Priority activities in this area are intended to provide effective and efficient administrative and support services to program and regional operation and include the following:

1. Develop an integrated budget plan, with separate votes for each Minister of State, and one staffing, communications and systems plan for all Ministers of State.
2. Provide leadership in the management of geographical information and mapping services and consolidate mapping services within government under a single management structure.
3. Review line ministry administrative boundaries and make recommendations for adjustments to facilitate a better coordination of government services with regional development initiatives.
4. Increase the Government Agent's role in providing public access government information and services.
5. Review the activities of Government Agents and clarify their role in providing assistance to Ministers of State.
6. Develop a five-year business plan for the Crown Land Account.

OTHER GOVERNMENT REGIONALIZATION INITIATIVES

There are a number of other key government initiatives relating to regional development which have been assigned to other line ministries. The Ministers of State will assist in the implementation of these initiatives as required. These initiatives are summarized below.

Advanced Education and Job Training

- A general strategy for advanced education and training prepared in consultation with the eight regional access committees.
- A strategy for the regional delivery of employment and job training programs/services.

Agriculture and Fisheries

- A strategy to promote value-added agriculture processing industries.
- A strategy to promote technology and information transfers to producers and agri-business.

Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

- Recommendations with respect to mine closures, reclamations and mineral taxes.
- A strategy for the future development and use of electricity.

International Business and Immigration

- Fast-track implementation of the province's international business strategy.

Labour and Consumer Services

- Development and implementation of regional alcohol and drug abuse prevention awareness programs.
- Development and implementation of regional traffic safety awareness programs.

Transportation and Highways

- Transportation plans for each development region.

SECTION IV: ORGANIZATION — SUPPORTING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This section of the Business Plan shows how Government proposes to bring together the key resources and important leadership components to build strong regional economies and enhance the quality of life in all regions of the Province.

THE MINISTERS OF STATE

Government has established the Ministry of Regional Development and Ministers of State to be responsible for a major and sustained program of regional development in British Columbia and lead the policy planning function for the eight development regions. Included in the mandate of the Ministers of State is the improved delivery of government services, according to the needs of the region. The Ministers of State will fulfill this mandate by:

- Fostering regional business development and assessing the broad economic development and diversification potential and priorities of the region.
- Receiving business development proposals and assisting businesses through a variety of business assistance programs, including the Regional Seed Capital, Western Diversification and ERDA programs.
- Advocating on behalf of specific regional economic proposals, including working with the various line ministries to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to support regional economic development.
- Coordinating regional economic development by matching regional strengths and needs with potential industries and markets.
- Providing a link between the region and the Ministry of International Business and Immigration.
- Participation on the Cabinet Committee for Regional Development and presentation of regional opportunities to Cabinet.
- Fast-tracking of critical issues to Cabinet.
- Working with the MLAs, local governments and Regional Development Groups to ensure effective mechanisms for consultation with and involvement of the people of the region in the provincial decision-making process.

In carrying out their mandate the Ministers of State will have access to the resources and staff in all ministries and will be assisted by MLAs, local governments and Regional Development Groups.

The approach taken by the Ministers of State will reflect the unique needs of the region and will be responsive to differences in aspirations and priorities between regions. At the same time, the Ministers will also develop a team approach to problem-solving, budgeting and resource allocation in the interests of development across the Province.

The portfolios of the Ministers of State are:

- Minister of Regional Development and Minister of State for Mainland/Southwest
- Minister of State for Vancouver Island/Coast and North Coast and Minister Responsible for Parks
- Minister of State for Thompson-Okanagan and Kootenay and Minister Responsible for Crown Lands
- Minister of State for Cariboo and Minister Responsible for Environment
- Minister of State for Nechako and Northeast and Minister Responsible for Native Affairs

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Each development region has been assigned a Parliamentary Secretary to support the activities of the Minister of State. The role of the Parliamentary Secretaries includes:

- Representing the Minister of State in the region.
- Assisting the Minister of State in the coordination of economic development initiatives and provincial government services in the region.
- Working with local government and private sector bodies.

THE ROLE OF MLAs

Representing constituents and lobbying for their interests remains the first responsibility of MLAs. By changing the planning and decision-making process for economic and social development, regionalization gives MLAs greater clout and more effective mechanisms to execute their duties and responsibilities. No longer will the MLA have to go from ministry to ministry when attempting to advocate for regional initiatives that span several areas of government responsibility. By going direct to the Minister of State, they can cut through the usual red tape and gain access to the resources and services of all concerned ministries.

MLAs of all parties are therefore expected to play a significant part in regional development. Working with Ministers of State, MLAs will act as key facilitators of local and regional economic and social development. They will also contribute directly to the process whereby the Minister of State brings regional initiatives to Cabinet.

CABINET COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Cabinet Committee on Regional Development combines regional and line ministers in a policy framework that, for the first time, recognizes the importance of regional priorities and initiatives in the establishment of economic policy.

Chaired by the Minister of Regional Development, its members include:

- Minister of State for Vancouver Island/Coast and North Coast and Minister Responsible for Parks
- Minister of State for Thompson-Okanagan and Kootenay and Minister Responsible for Crown Lands
- Minister of State for Cariboo and Minister Responsible for Environment
- Minister of State for Nechako and Northeast and Minister Responsible for Native Affairs
- Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training and Minister Responsible for Science and Technology
- Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
- Minister of Forests
- Minister of Transportation and Highways
- Minister of International Business and Immigration
- Minister of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture
- Minister of Tourism and Provincial Secretary

The Cabinet Committee on Regional Development is responsible for formulating policies and programs which encourage regional economic development and diversification. The committee's key challenge is to strengthen and diversify the economies of all regions, taking into account the needs and resources of each region and ensuring that regional opportunities are maximized. In carrying out its responsibilities for regional development the committee will coordinate its activities with the Cabinet Committees on Environment and Land Use, Native Affairs and Social Policy.

The committee will also coordinate policies and undertake special projects that enhance social development and improve the delivery of government services in all the regions.

The work of the Cabinet Committee on Regional Development is supported by a Deputy Ministers' Committee. Chaired by the Deputy Minister of Regional Development, committee members include the Associate Deputy Ministers to the Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers from participating line ministries.